

29.

Dr. Burnet's

LETTER

To his Friend in

LONDON.

Being an Answer to a late Scurrilous Pamphlet Entituled

HIS FAREWELL.

SIR,

MY acquaintance with you, which happily commenced at our meeting in Scotland, and those many friendly caresses wherewith you have vouchsaf'd to salute me, are the daily remembrances of that great respect and veneration I owe you, and seem to imply that I have leave to address my self to you as to an *Asylum*, a place of refuge and security. I know Sir, you are, for great a friend to truth and honesty, that you always appear vigorous in the defence of Innocency, your comfort the Dejected, i relieve the Oppressed, and to speak the sense of all that know you. Your Charity is universal, and extends it self to the several exigencies of those that become your Petitioners.

My circumstances at present enforce me Sir (without any introductions, or circumlocutions) to solicit your favour for the prevention of that mischief that so loudly threatens me. I am sensible that the lashes, and persecutions of malevolent Tongues, are more intolerable than the severest of human afflictions, and to my great dissatisfaction I find, since my departure, I am too too grossly scandaliz'd, and reproach'd; what the consequence of such popular licence may prove, such a discerning person as your self may easily foresee. To you therefore Sir, and to all other Gentlemen of the like integrity, and veracity, I apply my self, that by your undaunted Vindication of me, you may put a check to that impetuous torrent of Scandal that seems to overwhelm me, and am lately Sir, expos'd, and insufferably abus'd not only by the perverse Tongues of inveterate Men, whose Passions are as irregular as their Morts, But by the wider and more licentious Mouth of the Press: The Scurrilous Pamphlet has circulated the Town, and by this time I presume it is sent by you. How full of spleen and Malice it is, is easily discernable to any unprejudic'd person. The Spirit of malediction is notoriously visible through every line, that one would think, people should not be so credulous as to take for granted, what is so slyly insinuated by the mercenary Scribler. I shall therefore unravel all the Vanity, Folly, and inconsistency of that sheet that bears so hard upon my Reputation. Wherein you must understand he first gives me the Title of a *Confessor*, yet and *Confessor* to the Late King of Poland, too. A great promotion to which this insignificant Pamphleteer advances me. Certainly if ever impudence be reckon'd a virtue, it will be now, for never did sham, and imposture prevail so much upon a people as at this instant.

The next Complement he affords me is no less than *Deep dy'd Robt*, and makes me leap from *Scandal* into *Scandal* in a moment, and so show himself. Under of judgment he pretends a substantial reason for so doing, which is the likeness of his hard word. *Congratulatory to the Cause*, here, *By profound pieces of Scandal*: I would fain know whether this mighty *Man of Parallel*, values himself upon such a production; if he does, I must tell him, that any *Billinggate* Oyster Woman can easily arrive at the like excellency. For Scandal, and Reproach is the talent of the Rabble, and Porters, and Carmencas challenge a great share in our Scribler. But however Sir, this is my comfort, that men of that subtlety and scribes of life, with your selfe, cannot easily entertain any vile, or basan thought of me. Now, and all this clutter about *Pamparin* Rebell his *Tapley's*-*Perkinski's*, his ridiculous chiming with *Routs* and *Riots*, *Confusion*, and *Faction*; His prophanie intermixing *Sacred History* with his excrementitious stuff, his ridiculous discourse of the *Acts of the Dyer*, his foolish story of Milk and Mackrel; What is it the Gentleman fixes upon me? Why Sir, tis some Enormous Crime, some *grande nefar*, & *morte piandum*, no less than *Misprision* at least. Now where's the proof of what is so heavily lay'd to my charge? Not a word of seriousnes, argument, or any thing like to be found.

I shall therefore to satisfy you Sir, (and all whose curiosity leads him to peruse those Pamphlets that are daily vend'd) open my self with uningenious freedom and plausibility, for the confirmation of that good opinion you have concey'd of me. The general outcry against me is in reference to that Gentleman, my late Lord Russel, of my advising him to conceal and palliate those things, which he seem'd to confess of his own inclination; The report is so common and so universally received, that it is not without great difficulty to remove their prejudices. But those that will credit truth when it is delivered with such allearations, can distinguish twixt credulity, and mistaken zeal, and I suppose will vouchsafe to believe me upon those Representations.

1. I declare that I had no other design in visiting my Lord in his unhappy circumstances, than to give him Spiritual instructions and advice for the benefit of his immortal Soul. Let the malice of men suggest what it pleases, the dictates of my own conscience tell me, that I have done nothing but what a Christian might Honourably justify before the face of the whole World. And in that capacity of a Divine, I reckon'd it my duty (considering my acquaintance with his Lordship) to intercede with my Prayers and Spiritual assistance. But for having that influence over his Lordship, as people would fain represent, is a mistake as groundless as ridiculous. Besides, they little imagine how much they rest upon his Lordship's judgment, to be exact according to the instructions of any man. 'Tis certain my Lord fell not under the Character of so injudicious a Person amongst the knowing part of mankind, as to be so easy, and credulous as to be modell'd according to any one's fancy.

But for my self I must declare that I had no interest in paying him those frequent visits, but the real promotion of his Soul's Eternal welfare.

2. As for my dissection to the present Establish'd Government or my lukewarmness, or damn'd neutrality (as they call it) 'tis as Groundless as the former objection against me. I am, I presume, so well known, that I need not make any great Apology for this calumny against me. Those that have had the opportunity of my Conversation and the advantage of my Ministry, cannot find by any of my discourses any thing tending to the derogation of the Government.

However this abusive Pamphleteer takes great freedom with me, and 'tis no wonder, for it must be an elevated piece of impudence that does the thing when nothing of reality appears in the Accusation.

3. Be pleas'd to observe the scurility of his language, he says I have nothing but a Religious Cause to recommend me to the Observation of any judicious person. I have no mind to take notice of the obloquy, since I am not fond of my Credit in that particular. There is no man has more humble thoughts of himself then I have, and for his anxious reflections that I was taken notice of before any of the Reverend Prelates of the Land, by the Members of Parliament, I have nothing to say at present, but that my designs were Honourable, without any affectation of popularity.

I must be bold to say that I have a great veneration for this Augt Assembly, and what I have delivered from the Pulpit, has been honestly done, and meant.

4. As for those Doctrines which he would insinuate that I approve; I utterly deny it. Non-subsistance and taking up arms against Lawful Authority, is a Doctrine I never believ'd neither did I ever teach, or encourage it. My conversation has been always peaceable, free from extremes, and if my strictness of Life, and strongly inculcating of it in others is become a Crime, I wonder to what a pitch of impiety the World will come. And have been a Son of the Church of England, I endeavoured (in that Sphere I was) to keep up the Credit and reputation against the wild Opinions of some hot Brav'd people. But I find let a man be as much so Orthodox, some people (who make it their busines to disparage our reformed Religion) will find somewhat whereby to calumniate and reproach him. I wish this licentious spirit of malediction may be stopt, otherwise I cannot find but the very foundations of our Church and Religion will totter, and come to Ruine. I am sure some would be glad to see her in the Dust.

Lately for the other inconsistent reports of his imputation of *Lèse-majesté* and *Treason*, to pass it over in silence would be the greatest piece of prudence. The great sceptic's of the Age know no more compendious way to affront Religion, than by casting dirt in Face of its Professors. And in their most remarkable abuses they are sure something will stick close, that afterwards may reflect upon a man's reputation, *forsiter calumniare, aliquid habere*.

Now after all Sir, I must beg your pardon for this Freedom in molesting you with such ungrateful repetitions; However my design is to satisfy a too credulous World, that those common popular reflections upon me, are the inventions of Malice and revenge. I and other people that make considerable Figures in the Church, cannot be exempted from unmerciful reproaches, but with their Quarries &c. No serious person can be secure without being Stigmatiz'd.

To you therefore I apply my self that by your influence over your acquaintance you may stop that Torrent that seems to carry all before it. This you may please to let the World know that the Dr (for reasons best known to himself) who at present reigns will appear again to the confusion and consternation of such pedantic Calumniators as our ignoble Pamphleteer. I am with all respect and submission,

Your Humble Servant,